

To A Louse
On Seeing One On A Lady's Bonnet, At Church

Ha! whaur ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?
Your impudence protects you sairly;
I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho', faith! I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Hey! Where are you going, you creepy crawly?
Your impudence protects you surely;
I cannot say but you swagger rarely,
Over gauze and lace;
Though, faith! I fear you dine but sparely
On such a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
How daur ye set your fit upon her-
Sae fine a lady?
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

You ugly, creeping, blasted wonder,
Detested, shunned by saint and sinner,
How dare you set your feet upon her –
So fine a lady?
Go somewhere else and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

Swith! in some beggar's haffet squattle;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle,
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whaur horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Off! on some beggar's temple squat;
There you may creep, and sprawl, and scramble
With other kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Where horn nor bone (combs) never dare unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels, snug and tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right,
Till ye've got on it-
The verra tapmost, tow'rin height
O' Miss' bonnet.

*Now hold on there, you're out of sight,
Below the ribbons, snug and tight;
No, faith just yet! You'll not be right,
'Til you've got on it -
The very topmost, towering height
Of Miss's bonnet.*

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump an' grey as ony groset:
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum.

*My word! Right bold you set your nose out,
As plump and grey as any gooseberry:
Oh for some rank, mercurial rosin,
Or deadly, red powder (insecticide),
I'd give you such a hearty dose of it,
Would adorn your bottom.*

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flainen toy;
Or aiblins some bit dubbie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss' fine Lunardi! fye!
How daur ye do't?

*I would not be surprised to spy
You on an old wife's flannel cap;
Or perhaps some small ragged boy,
On his flannel vest;
But Miss's fine fancy hat! Good grief!
How dare you do it?*

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abroad!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin:
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin.

*Oh Jenny, don't toss your head,
And set your curls flying all abroad!
You little know what cursed speed
The beast is making:
Those winks and fingers pointing, I dread,
Are notice taking.*

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!

*Oh would some Power the gift give us
To see ourselves as others see us!
It would from many a blunder free us,
And foolish notion:
What airs in dress and gait would leave us,
And even devotion!*

-Robert Burns

(translated, with no attempt to keep the rhyme nor meter, by Charlene Wight)